

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0022

FOR AF ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV US XA BC
SUBJ: NEW POLICY INITIATIVES IN AFRICA

REF: (A) 77 STATE 311031, (B) 77 GABORONE 3067 AND PREVIOUS

1. WE COMMEND DEPARTMENT FOR INITIATIVE AND IMAGINATION IN SEEKING WAYS TO STRENGTHEN TIES WITH RELATIVELY MODERATE STATES IN AFRICA. AS THE LESS EXOTIC, AND OFTEN LESS TROUBLESOME, NATIONS IN THIS AREA, THE SMALLER AND MORE MODERATE STATES DO RUN THE RISK OF BEING ECLIPSED BY THEIR LARGER AND MORE PROBLEMATIC NEIGHBORS. WE WARMLY ENDORSE THE COURSES OF ACTION DESIGNED TO MAINTAIN A BALANCED AFRICAN POLICY, ONE WHICH REWARDS OUR FRIENDS AS WELL AS APPLIES GREASE TO THE SQUEAKING WHEELS OF THE CONTINENT.

2. AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE THE UNEASY FEELING THAT THE OTHER-WISE WELL-DEVELOPED POLICY DOCUMENT (REF A) TENDS TOO QUICKLY TO PASS BY THE FRONTLINE STATES AND, PARTICULARLY, BOTSWANA. IN PARA 4, THE REF SAYS: "WE ARE ALREADY WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE FRONTLINE STATES." THIS IS CERTAINLY QUITE TRUE, BUT WE BELIEVE A PAPER OF THIS SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE SHOULD DEAL WITH THE FLS IN MORE DETAIL AND AT GREATER LENGTH. FURTHERMORE, WE FEEL THAT BOTSWANA SHOULD PROFIT FROM A GENERALIZED USG DETERMINATION TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE FLS IN PROPORTION TO ITS UNIQUENESS
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AS THE ONLY TRULY DEMOCRATIC, NON-RACIAL AND MODERATE OF THE FRONTLINE STATES, IF NOT OF ALL THE STATES IN AFRICA. BOTSWANA IS NOT TANZANIA OR ZAMBIA, MUCH LESS ANGOLA OR MOZAMBIQUE; WHILE THOSE COUNTRIES MAY RECEIVE A GOOD DEAL OF ATTENTION IN THE FORM OF HIGH-LEVEL VISITS, CLOSE CONSULTATION, ETC., BOTSWANA HAS GENERALLY BEEN LEFT WITH THE SHORT STRAW PARTLY BECAUSE OF ITS MODERATION, BUT OFTEN DUE SIMPLY TO LOGISTICAL

PROBLEMS ARISING FROM GABORONE'S SHORT RUNWAY.

3. WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THREE COURSES OF ACTION PURSUED VIS-A-VIS BOTSWANA, WHICH WOULD IMPLY THE SAME COA'S BEING CARRIED OUT WITH RESPECT TO THE OTHER MODERATE STATES IN AFRICA:

A. WE HAVE SEVERAL TIMES REQUESTED (REF B) AT LEAST ONE VISIT BY A HIGH-LEVEL USG ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL TO UNDERSCORE OUR SUPPORT (IDEOLOGICAL AS WELL AS MATERIAL) OF BOTSWANA'S POLICIES. WE NOTE THE MENTION IN REF A OF TWO POSSIBLY FORTHCOMING VISITS TO AFRICA BY DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER AND AMBASSADOR YOUNG, AND FERVENTLY HOPE THAT ONE OF THOSE VISITS MIGHT INCLUDE BOTSWANA (NOTE: WHILE GABORONE'S AIRPORT IS NOT SUITABLE FOR LARGE JETS, THE DATT/PRETORIA HAS A KING AIR WHICH MAKES THE HOP FROM THERE TO GABORONE QUICK AND EASY.)

B. WE STRONGLY ENDORSE THE SUGGESTION UNDER III, "ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES", THAT SPECIAL SELF HELP FUNDS BE INCREASED AT CERTAIN AFRICAN POSTS. WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY BELIEVED THAT SPECIAL SELF HELP FUNDS PROVIDE OPTIMUM VALUE FOR MONEY EXPENDED AND, DEPENDING UPON OUR SUCCESS IN FULLY UTILIZING OUR FY 78 ALLOCATION, WOULD HOPE BOTSWANA MIGHT BE INCLUDED IN FUTURE INCREMENTS TO THE SELF HELP PROGRAM.

C. ANOTHER WAY TO OBTAIN MAXIMUM BENEFIT FOR RELATIVELY LOW COST WOULD BE, WE BELIEVE, TO EXPAND THE CU EXCHANGE PROGRAM IN
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SELECTED AFRICAN COUNTRIES, WITH EMPHASIS ON SHORT-TERM IV GRANTS. WE HAVE FOUND THIS TO BE ONE OF THE MOST DIRECT AND EFFECTIVE WAYS OF TANGIBLY DEMONSTRATING OUR SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT TO THE HOST GOVERNMENT.

4. WE HOPE THAT THESE COMMENTS WILL BE OF SOME HELP. NOTHING SAID ABOVE SHOULD BE SEEN AS DETRACTING FROM THE BASICALLY LAUDIBLE INTENT AND SUBSTANCE OF THE REFERENCED DOCUMENT; NOR ARE WE UNAPPRECIATIVE OF THE CONSIDERATE AND SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS BY THE DEPARTMENT TO KEEP US AND THE GOB INFORMED AS OUR SOUTHERN AFRICA POLICY UNFOLDS.
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